

Kessler, Ellen

From: chelmberger@yahoo.com
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2009 2:04 PM
To: Strength, Stephanie - Washington, DC
Subject: Fw: Powerlines: South Dakota through Minnesota (Hampton, Rochester) to LaCrosse, Wisconsin

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hello,
Stephanie, I submitted this to you on 6/29 but wanted to be sure that you received it.

Please read the entire email of mine below but in short:

- I-209-001** | 1. This is a massive project through South Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin - it is not just a segment from Hampton to LaCrosse.
- I-209-002** | 2. This is a huge financial impact to people whose land and homes will be devalued.
- I-209-003** | 3. There are existing rights of way that the power companies can use and they choose not to do this. Using existing lines would be less disruptive to families and ag land and acreage land.
- 4. Excel Energy has about 44 full time lobbyists at the Minnesota Capitol. Yet the 22,000 plus individuals directly impacted as their land has to be given up(so you can imagine how many indirectly are impacted -ie their home is within a short distance of the powerlines) are just a whisper. Please do NOT let the big guys get there way on this. You must know that 22,000 canNOT be in favor of these powerlines.
- I-209-005** | 5. There needs to be more research on if there really is the need for these massive powerlines. If these go in, they will double and triple over time.
- I-209-004** | 6. One can only think that we in Minnesota and Wisconsin will have our land taken from us for pennies compared to what it is worth only to let these lines bring power to other states way east of here.

Thank you,
Cindy Helmberger

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: Cindy Helmberger <chelmberger@yahoo.com>
To: stephanie.strength@usda.gov
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2009 2:52:19 PM
Subject: Powerlines: South Dakota through Minnesota (Hampton, Rochester) to LaCrosse, Wisconsin

Hello,
I am writing regarding the large multi-faceted powerline project from South Dakota to Minnesota to Wisconsin.

If I may please ask that you email me back that you received my email, I would appreciate it

ET2/TL-08-1474 CapX 2020 Brookings to Hampton / Rochester to LaCrosse
345 KV Transmission Lines
Submitted by Cindy Helmberger (24311 Lakeville, MN 55044 @ "New Market
Township in Scott County).

I-209-001

Your comment has been noted. While the CapX2020 projects involve four independent projects being developed in a similar time frame with some of the same of utilities participating, the Purpose and Need for the CapX2020 Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse 345-kV Project was developed and proven independently of the other CapX2020 projects. The Alternative Evaluation Study addresses project Purpose and Need. It is available at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>, which has been approved by the RUS. Purpose and Need will also be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be available on the RUS website at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>. Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be solicited after its publication.

I-209-002

Your comment has been noted. Socioeconomic impacts to property values affected by the transmission line will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

I-209-003

Your comment has been noted. The criteria used to route the transmission line is described in the Macro Corridor Study which is available on the RUS website at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>. These criteria and routing process will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The project is still in the development and planning stages and the utilities have not yet permitted a route for the transmission line.

I-209-004

Your comment has been noted. RUS anticipates that the CapX2020

My area of concern for which I am commenting on is the Rice, Scott and Dakota (Minnesota) counties.

Please note: The powerline is from Brookings , South Dakota and has running routes throughout Minnesota and Wisconsin . It is NOT just the Hampton/ Rochester to LaCrosse, WI line. Great River Energy and Xcel Energy's proposal was for several high voltage lines that interconnect and is multi-faceted and has future plans to these lines. Please consider the entirety of this project (South Dakota , Minnesota and Wisconsin) and its devastation to communities, people, landowners and the environment. If these powerlines are approved, it is only allowing future powerlines to be built and to tag onto these new powerlines. The power companies already have acknowledged and received approval to double the voltage on these 345 KV lines. So the project is not just what will happen in 2010 it will be what happens in the future. If the rights of way are granted, they and any other type of telecommunication or powerlines are given open access to whatever.

CAPX2020

•• Their mailings did NOT indicate on the outside of the envelopes that it had to do with powerlines through the person's neighborhood or backyard. People tossed the envelopes aside as they had no idea what CAPX2020 was.

•• Applicant's Appendix K " regarding public comment was only 2 pages long. There were only 393 comments out of 22,000 mailings. How could they base any decisions on routes or what people thought based on 393 comments. These comments could have been from 10 people only.

•• For landowner's whose land or homes would be impacted and require an easement " there was no certified letter mailed " just another generic envelope.

•• CAPX failed in their mailings and failed with their meetings which I am sure had very low attendance.

•• They failed in their preferred and alternate route selection. They could have chosen a route based on their own original proposals that would not impact so many people and homes.

•• In the past month or two the meetings and the involvement of citizens is due only to the citizens notifying their neighbors of what is going on.

•• CAPX2020 has proposed a build up of the Lake Marion substation in Lakeville , MN . The application references purchasing between 12 to 16 acres at the current Lake Marion substation. Allowing them to build up this station will only be an invitation for more powerlines. The area near this station is very populated with homes as it is one household per 2.5 acres. Such a massive substation should not be allowed near that many humans.

•• It is very feasible for CAPX and the utility companies to develop a new substation south of the Lake Marion one in a less densely populated area. Then they can run distributor lines from the new south substation to Lake Marion . I know someone who spoke with a person at Great River Energy who said they could build a new substation in this area and that it did NOT need to be at Lake Marion . Having two substations in the area would make the system more reliable because if there was an issue at a sole substation, then the system does not have a back up to rely on.

•• Scott County Minnesota Board voted unanimously on the topic of the powerlines and it is NOT for these lines in the county.

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Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Minnesota Administrative Rules # 7849.5910 Factors Considered:

a. Aesthetics: visual impact from project. . Scott county townships on route has a population of 8,125 and that does not include parts of New Prague. Rice county townships on route has population of 6,088. The powerlines will be seen for miles " a devastating and huge impact aesthetically and monetarily. Nobody wants powerlines in their neighborhood however, if the lines need to go somewhere the route should be where there are less people

Utilities would pay for land rights based on an independent appraisal and will work with property owners to negotiate easement payments after the permitting process.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be available on the RUS website at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>. Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be solicited after its publication.

I-209-005

Your comment has been noted. The criteria used to route the transmission line is described in the Macro Corridor Study which is available on the RUS website at:

<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>. These criteria and routing process will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The project is still in the development and planning stages and the utilities have not yet permitted a route for the transmission line.

impacted. I heard that they may consider burying 2 miles of lines by Hiawatha because people do not want them.

b. Cultural Resources: People choose to move out to the semi-rural area for the cultural values of "small town". The values of those who spent a lot of money to purchase land and their homes will be destroyed. Example: A person spent \$200,000 on a lot in Scott County and built a \$500,000 home. Now powerlines will be in their backyard or very visible to them. Now that \$700,000 investment is reduced down to \$450,000 or less and maybe the person will get \$ 5,000 for that loss?

c. Land Use: Primarily, it is not judicious to have powerlines run through land and near homes that will lose the most financially.

d. Socioeconomic: Population information. Noted above. Repeated again: Why run powerlines through areas where there are currently more people and in the future will allow more people? Utility System: The alternate route through the areas of my concern would only cost \$ 8 million more dollars. That is only \$ 100 each for 80,000 users of electricity to make up that \$ 8 million. Let those using the electricity pay such a low amount for the extra cost. Why should those who will lose the most financially have to lose up to hundreds of thousands of dollars because the line goes through / near their home. The utility companies can very easily buy land cheaper south of here and build a new substation there and then feed a small line up to Lake Marion.

Rights of way: There are existing rights of way in Rice county, along Interstate 35, and near Cannon Falls. They could utilize these existing rights of way, create a new substation that is closer to the existing lines in land areas that are NOT more densely populated.

e. Safety and Health: Just a simple question "would you want to live near an enormous powerline?" Just a simple comment "it has to be safer to live without a line than with one."

f. Natural Environment: Sections of land in New Market township are the start of the Vermillion watershed / trout stream.

More Comments:

1. I would please ask that the electricity need be analyzed. Have there really been any brownouts? We will most likely not see the population growth that was experienced "will the need really be there to have such a mass increase in electricity?"

2. Are these powerlines really for the people in Minnesota and Wisconsin or is their goal to direct electricity beyond these states?

3. Will the electricity companies mitigate damage done to the environment and the monetary loss that landowners will have?

4. Please, please, please have a much more in-depth study be done.

5. Have all the right state and Federal governments commented on the issues surrounding the powerlines?

6. Have there been impact studies done on comparable powerlines that have comparable impact to like communities and environment?

7. This is a huge endeavor by the power companies and it should thoughtfully and thoroughly be investigated by the different state and Federal agencies.

8. Has the uniqueness of the joint venture between Great River Energy and Xcel been investigated thoroughly? Meaning, are they placing this under the guise of a not for profit like Great River only to turn it over to Xcel Energy?

Thank you very much for the USDA's review of this project and what the impacts are.

Sincerely,

Cindy Helmberger